



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas



Ever ready

Astronaut John Blaha will soon begin his tour of duty on the Russian Mir Space Station. Story on Page 3.



Well wishes

JSC workers prepare to present a poster to Shannon Lucid signed by guests at JSC's Open House. Photo on Page 4.

Space News Roundup

Vol. 35

September 13, 1996

No. 36

Lopez-Alegria takes on new role in Russia

Astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria will replace Wendy Lawrence as NASA's director of operations, Russia, at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, outside Moscow.

In this rotation assignment, Lopez-Alegria will be the primary link between NASA and Russian management in Star City, coordinating all training and other operations involving NASA or contractor personnel. He will build upon the operational and personal relationships developed over the past two years between NASA, Star City management, American astronauts and Russian cosmonauts.

"Commander Lopez-Alegria will be an excellent asset to this international operation," said Frank Culbertson, shuttle/Mir program director. "His experience and leadership expertise will continue to build on the outstanding job Commander Lawrence has done for us in Star City."



Lopez-Alegria

Lopez-Alegria will leave for Russia in early October and will join fellow U.S. astronauts who are training for future stays aboard the Russian Mir Space Station and the International Space Station. Lawrence and Astronaut David Wolf will join Jerry Linenger, Michael Foale and James Voss, who are already training in Star City.

Selected as an astronaut in March 1992, Lopez-Alegria served as a mission specialist and flight engineer aboard *Columbia* on STS-73, the second United States Microgravity Laboratory mission.

The mission focused on materials science, biotechnology, combustion science, the physics of fluids and numerous scientific experiments housed in the pressurized Spacelab module. Lopez-Alegria served as the flight engineer during the ascent and entry phases of flight, and was responsible for all operations of the "blue" shift on orbit.



NASA Photo

In the white room of the Orbiter Access Arm, the STS-79 crew takes a break from dress rehearsal activities. Standing from left are, Mission Specialist Tom Akers, Commander Bill Readdy and Pilot Terry Wilcutt. Kneeling from left are, Mission Specialists Carl Walz, John Blaha and Jay Apt. The six astronauts are expected to lift off from Kennedy Space Center next week and link up to the Russian Mir Space Station on flight day three.

Goldin praises Lucid

By Natasha Calder

As Cosmonaut Researcher Shannon Lucid neared the end of her six months of scientific research last week, NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin called to congratulate her on her record-setting female flight.

"This is really an incredible achievement," Goldin said. "We are proud of you because of who you are and what you've accomplished and the strength you've shown in adversity."

"On a long duration flight, the type of things we're going to see on the International Space Station, there are going to be many things that are going to happen, and there are going to be difficulties," Goldin said.

"Your enthusiasm and the way you have been able to take small setbacks in stride inspires everyone here down on Earth."

Elena Kondakova, the Russian Cosmonaut who, prior to Saturday, held the record for the length of time a female has spent in space on a single flight, also congratulated Lucid on her record last Friday.

"I will be happy for Shannon Lucid that she will stay in space for a longer time," Kondakova said. "It proves that women

can work in space as long as men." Lucid's flight has been a training experience for all of those who support and will support such long duration missions, including NASA's

Please see **BLAHA**, Page 4



BLAHA

Hurricane track to allow Monday launch of STS-79

With a watchful eye on Hurricane Hortense in the Caribbean, engineers continue routine close out procedures to ready *Atlantis* for Monday's launch on STS-79.

The new launch time of 3:54 a.m. CDT Monday for *Atlantis* was set last Thursday after Hurricane Fran's pass through the *Atlantic* sent the orbiter back into the Vehicle Assembly Bldg. for the second time and then back out to Launch Pad 39A hours later as the danger of severe weather in the Kennedy Space Center area had passed.

Back on the pad, ordnance installation and connection operations were delayed briefly by lightning on Monday at KSC but the work was completed by Tuesday. The EVA space suits have been installed and checked out in *Atlantis'* airlock and aft engine compartment close outs for flight were scheduled for completion Thursday. Installation of the equipment in the double Spacehab module in the payload bay also has been completed.

The STS-79 flight crew, including Commander Bill Readdy, Pilot Terry Wilcutt, and Mission Specialists Jay Apt, Tom Akers, Carl Walz and John Blaha, was scheduled to arrive at KSC by T-38 before dawn today. The mission countdown was to have begun at T-43 hours at the same time as the crew arrival.

Monday's launch date will set *Atlantis* up for rendezvous and docking for a fourth time with the Russian Mir Space Station at 10:17 p.m. CDT on Wednesday. Once docked, the STS-79 crew will transfer the largest amount of logistics—including food, clothing, experiment supplies and space equipment for Mir—ever shipped to the Russian station aboard an American shuttle. In addition, Blaha will settle into his new home on Mir as U.S. Astronaut Shannon Lucid packs her things on *Atlantis* for her return trip

to Earth after more than six months on the Russian outpost. Blaha will spend four months in space on Mir conducting a variety of experiments. He will come home during STS-81 in January.

While docked, the STS-79 and Mir 22 crews will conduct a variety of experiments in the Spacehab module. The science module, nestled in *Atlantis'* cargo bay, has been expanded for STS-79 so that more experiments can be performed during docked operations.

In-cabin payloads on STS-79 include the IMAX camera, and the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment, which the astronauts and cosmonauts will use to talk to school children around the world as well as other amateur radio operators. In addition, *Atlantis* carries the first powered experiments to transfer to Mir.

Atlantis will remain docked to Russia's space station for five days, with undocking set for 8:31 p.m. on Sept. 23. Landing of *Atlantis* is targeted for about 7:12 a.m. Sept. 26 at KSC.

Meanwhile, the stacking of the solid rocket boosters for *Columbia's* launch on STS-80 began Monday and will take approximately two weeks to complete. Preparations for final checks of the main propulsion system and rudder speed brake are in work and installation of the main engine heat shield continues. *Columbia* is tentatively set for launch Oct. 31.

The STS-80 crew, Commander Ken Cockrell, Pilot Kent Rominger, and Mission Specialists Tammy Jernigan, Tom Jones and Story Musgrave, will spend 16 days in orbit to deploy and retrieve the ORFEUS-SPAS astronomy satellite and deploy and retrieve the Wake Shield Facility. In addition, two space walks are scheduled to test assembly techniques for construction of the International Space Station.



Hurricane season builds during fall

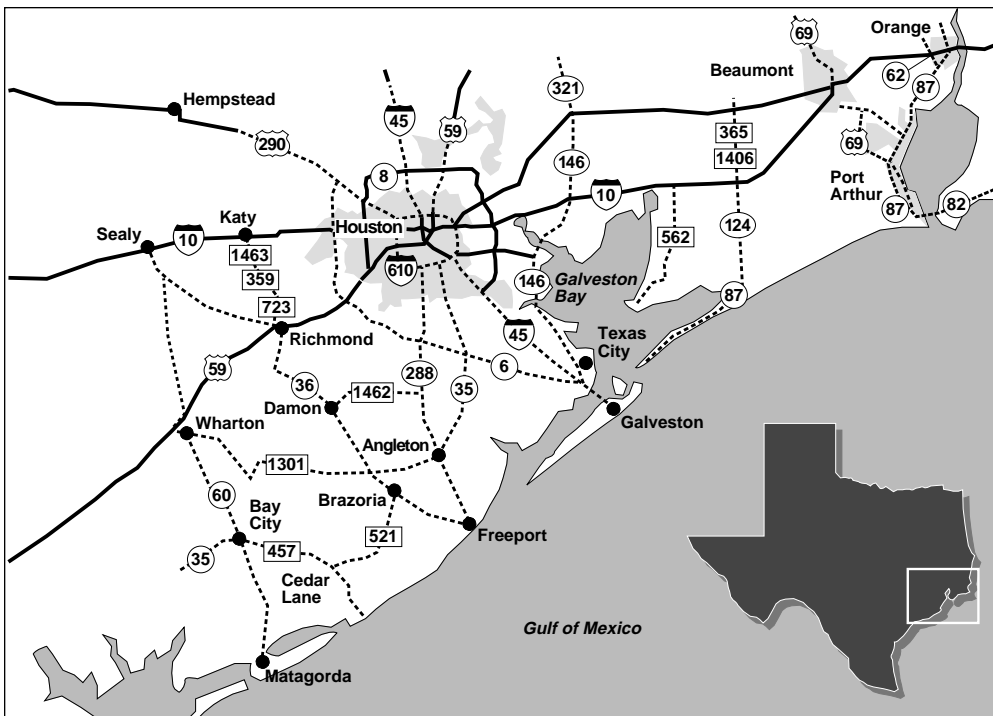
By Bob Gaffney

With hurricane season about half over, weather forecasters have begun to see a great deal of tropical activity and employees may want to check their emergency supplies and evacuation procedures.

"The recent reports on damaging wind, rain and flooding resulting from Hurricane Fran are a strong reminder of why it is important to prepare early and stay prepared," said Hurricane Plan Manager Keith McQuary. The hurricane season does not end until Nov. 30.

One of the items always of concern to JSC area residents is evacuation, should it become necessary. "Evacuation routes in the Clear Lake and Galveston areas are virtually unchanged since Alicia struck in 1983," McQuary said. What has changed since a hurricane struck the Houston area is the size of some residential areas. The residential expansion results in areas with double, or possibly, triple the number of

Please see **EMERGENCY**, Page 4



There are several evacuation routes out of the Houston area. Hurricane Plan Manager Keith McQuary suggests employees keep this map close at hand during the next few weeks as hurricane season peaks.

Emergency Numbers

Emergency	911
Harris County Flood Control (river levels)	713-881-3100
National Weather Service	713-337-7895
Texas Highway Department (road closures)	1-800-452-9292

Emergency Management Offices

American Red Cross	
Galveston County	409-945-7200
Harris County	713-526-0636
Baytown	713-420-6558
Clear Lake Shores	713-334-1034
Deer Park	713-478-7298
Dickinson	713-337-2489 x240
El Lago	713-326-1951
Friendswood	713-996-3335
Galveston	409-766-2102
Galveston County	409-948-2581 x102
Harris County	713-881-3100
Hitchcock	409-986-5559
Houston	713-754-0600
Kemah	713-334-5414
LaMarque	409-938-9269
League City	713-332-0440
Nassau Bay	713-333-4200
Pasadena	713-475-5588
Santa Fe	409-925-2000
Seabrook	713-474-4471
Taylor Lake Village	713-326-2843
Texas City	409-948-2525
Webster	713-332-1826